

The

Joy

of

Staying

the

Same



A Guide to help you uncover what you're already doing well, how even 'bad' habits seek to help, and why change can sometimes feel so hard.

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Starting, stopping, restarting.

Start

Stop

Restart

Quit.

Start again.

How often do we pick up a new habit, something we believe we really want to do, only to drop it again? And again. And again. “Why do I keep failing?” becomes, “Why am I always failing?” which can lead to, “I’m such a failure!”

You’ve tried so many times to make a change but you can’t seem to stick to it. Why? Is it because you really *are* weak-willed? No. It’s not that.

Often, it’s a combination of two things:

- You ARE making progress, but it’s not the dramatic, easily noticeable kind, and
- Something about your current habit is serving you, even if you don’t recognise it.

The *Joy of Staying the Same* is an interactive guide to help you identify what you’re already doing right, allowing you to expand on the habits you’ve already created, and to celebrate your progress. It also aims to help you uncover why some habits may be harder to break than others, even when you really want to.

Work through this guide at your own pace, taking breaks as required. Feel free to come back and make changes to your answers, and aim to be as honest as possible. Remember, this is for you. Nobody else needs to see this. However, if you find that you do need support, please seek it out. This can be through a coach, a trustworthy friend or a mental health practitioner, to name a few. Asking for help is one of the bravest things we can do.



Where are You?

Let's find out where you are on your journey.

Describe your current situation in the space below. What does a typical week look like? Or is there no typical week and life feels like chaos right now? Aim to include what your meals typically look like, any training or movement you are currently doing, your responsibilities (your job, parenting, housework, etc.), and anything you do for leisure. If you really don't know where your time goes, you can try tracking how you spend your time for a few days; this can be quite the eye opener.



What's working, what's not?

Look at what you wrote on the previous page and list out what's working and what's not working. If you think of other relevant things while you're working through this guide, come back and include them in your list.

What's working

Example

- *I have a healthy dinner with protein and vegetable most evenings*
-

What's not working

Example

- *I stay up watching TV and doom scrolling till way too late*
-



More of the Good Stuff please

Refer to your 'What's Working' list and brainstorm ways you can expand on this. For example: If dinner is protein rich and full of vegetables, can you start adding some sauteed vegetables to your morning eggs? Or ditch the cereal that leaves you peckish by mid-morning and have oats with greek yoghurt instead? Don't censor yourself or scrutinise your ideas too much at this stage, just write down whatever ideas come up.

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Now that you've listed everything you can think of (for now), let's edit. Here is where you start to scrutinise. You've written 'add sauteed mushrooms, spinach and tomato to your poached eggs' something you saw on social media last night. But you hate mushrooms, and don't have the time to properly poach eggs. Sauteed spinach and tomato with a couple of fried eggs though? Much more doable, and much more likely you'll eat it!

Go through your list now and pick out your winners. Don't be afraid to edit ideas to make them more workable, like the example given above.

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Why does change feel so hard?

Now go back to your list on page 4 and let's look at what's not working. Are any of these momentary lapses? Small things that got a little off track recently? Is there anything on that list that is out of character for you? E.g. going to bed late because your daughter's been sick this week, or you're nervous over an upcoming interview and haven't been sleeping well. Things that will resolve themselves or require very little effort from you to change, these are your easy wins. List any of these you may have and use them as momentum builders to help tackle the trickier stuff.

For the other items, have you tried to change these before? If so, how long did it last? Did something happen that led you to lapse back into your old habit? For example, people who have recently quit smoking may be triggered to smoke again after a particularly stressful event. Or your eating can be going really well until the end of year festivities, or even just the weekend, rolls around. List anything you've struggled to maintain any meaningful change over and, if you know, the reason why you went back to the old habit.

How's that working for ya?

Let's dig a little deeper on these repeat offenders. Sometimes you want to make a change. You make the change. You enjoy the change. Yet you still fall back into the old habit. What gives? Sometimes... something about the old habit is helping you, even if that help sabotages your goals.

For the remaining items on your list, we're going to look at the pros and cons of each. That's right. That binge eating before bed? That procrastination about going to the gym? It's helping you in some way. Maybe not in a way that you'd like, or are even aware of, but it is.

** This exercise may bring up strong emotions and may best be worked through with the help of a mental health practitioner.*

Example

Habit: Not going to the gym (even though I have a gym membership)

| <i>Pros</i> | <i>Cons</i> |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Saves me from embarrassment</i>- <i>Can't be judged by other gym goers</i>- <i>Don't have to be seen in tight active clothes</i>- <i>Won't look stupid not knowing how to use the machines</i>- <i>Won't lose weight so I'll stay safe</i>- <i>Stay invisible</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Wasting money</i>- <i>Not exercising</i>- <i>Getting more unfit</i>- <i>Feel tired and everything feels hard</i>- <i>Feel rubbish about myself</i>- <i>Letting myself down</i>- <i>Stay invisible</i> |



How's that working for ya? Worksheet

Habit:

Pros

Cons



How's that working for ya? Worksheet (cont.)

Habit:

Pros

Cons



Finding 'Pros' may feel difficult at first. After all, we're usually fixating on the 'Cons'. If you commit to being really honest with yourself, and allowing yourself to feel the discomfort, you may be surprised by what comes up. You may also find that some answers fall into both categories. In the example above, 'staying invisible' may be a safety mechanism for someone who has suffered some form of physical trauma, so can be seen as a 'pro', but it also stops the person from being seen in a way that allows them to participate in life on their own terms, so it's also a 'con'. The purpose of this exercise is to bring awareness to some of these deeper held beliefs, unknown barriers that may be holding you back from changes you truly want to make but have been unable to.

You may find it helpful to journal about what comes up. Nothing fancy, just getting your feelings and reactions down on a page and out of your head. Writing our emotions down often helps us process them and can be quite cathartic.

And now... a little restraint

While it can be exciting to make a bunch of changes and REVAMP YOUR LIFE! It's usually unsustainable. You've got a list, it's a good list... and it's not going anywhere. Choose one, maximum two things to focus on for the next week or two. Once you're confident it's sustainable and feels comfortable maintaining, make another change. Adding too much to your plate in one go (no pun intended) is usually a recipe for disaster (please, somebody stop me). This is why people yo-yo diet, and make extreme changes only to crash and burn. Too much too soon. Be like the tortoise, slow and steady. This is not a race.

Go back to your list, choose the habit that feels the easiest to do sustainably. This could be as simple as doing more of a good thing. Already walking twice a week for 10 minutes? Maybe increase that to three times a week, or go for 15 minute walks instead. Choose a habit that feels so easy, it's almost impossible to fail. These easy wins are important confidence and consistency builders. It's much easier to keep going than it is to start, so build on what's already working. The harder stuff will feel less ominous as you continue to grow your capacity to do more of what you want, and leave behind the habits that no longer serve you.

And if you lapse? It's not the end of the world. Get back up and keep going. Like a driver who's taken a wrong turn, they don't turn around and drive back home, they get back on track and keep going, and so can you.



Where to from here?

Congratulations on completing this guide. Inner work is often the hardest type of work we can do. It requires honesty, vulnerability and the willingness to sit in discomfort. It requires courage. Acknowledge yourself for that. Now, you may be wondering, what comes next? How to put all this self-reflection into action? You can use this new self awareness to start making small, sustainable changes. Changes that compound and lead to real, lasting results. No more starting over, no more extremes. That's what I help women with in Unstoppable.

Building consistency and real strength in a way that actually fits their life. No extremes, no all-or-nothing. Just showing up, week after week, without the guilt of starting over. If you'd like support with that, I can help.

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Notes



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